

Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

6:00 PM Media Center

Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts

350 Division Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860

I. Meeting will come to order: Roll call

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here; Mr. Spooner-here

Also in attendance was Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Thomas Conlon, Business Administrator and Ms. Vicki Bejma, Legal Counsel from Robinson & Clapham for the Pawtucket School Committee.

II. Pledge of Allegiance:

The pledge of allegiance was led by the Chairperson.

While everyone remained standing, the Chairperson requested a moment of silence in honor of Mrs. Mary McGrath who was recently honored by the committee for her sixty two years of service with the Pawtucket School Department and who had recently passed away. The Chairperson also asked that we remember a former committee member's (Mr. Jon Anderson) father's friend who had also passed away recently.

III. Special Reports of Student Representatives:

Charles E. Shea High School:

Luckson: Melitzi is visiting colleges so I brought with me my twin

sister, Lydia, who is the Student Council President at Shea and also the Class President of the Senior Class, Kandace K.

One of our students, Derek M. won an essay contest and \$50 scholarship about patriotism and what it means to you. We are expecting all of you to be at the NEASC visit on May 1, 2011 at 2:00 PM. That's when the "we are Shea" video will be aired. One of our athletes for track and field, Freddy G., is undefeated in New England. We have honors night coming up also.

Kandace: Good evening. We had Shea's first dance which was a sweetheart dance in February and it was very fun. We are also having a teacher versus students' dodge ball game which will be this Thursday at 6:00 PM which will be really fun to see the teachers get competitive with the students. We also have a China trip which is going to be happening soon. We have the pleasure of going there for twelve days and leave next Monday. We also have our Spanish group going to Cozumel, Mexico in May and they're going to visit more about the Incan civilization culture and we are going to use our Spanish skills there. We also have our prom which will be at the Johnson and Wales Inn. We are also going to Six Flags because the seniors excelled in our NECAPS, so that is our reward.

Lydia: Hello we have a lot of activities going on the first event we had was family fun day. We just ended project unity which Luckson and I organized with another school in Portsmouth. Where two schools come together and sees the differences between each other and apparently there were no huge dramatic differences between the two. Tomorrow I planned a trip for the members of student council to go to

laser tag and we're looking forward to that. We have a variety show coming up in June and hope to see some of you there. We are going to try to incorporate an awards show in it as well. Before the year ends we are going to try to do re-election of officers because obviously the seniors will be saying good bye.

Kandace: Also I'd like to mention the fashion show that will be going on May 5th. The students called up local businesses and signed contracts with them and we're doing the show and I think that was very professional of our students to negotiate with these businesses and borrow these outfits for a day and to be able to model them.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Noonan: I attended the yard sale for the China bound students and donated a gift and I haven't been at Shea in a very long time and I was impressed. That school was immaculately clean. It also hasn't changed since I went there. It was great.

William E. Tolman High School:

Alyssa: Hi, this has been such an exciting month illustrated by the fact that I just came directly from Brown and almost didn't make it. This month is crazy full of stuff for seniors and juniors and tons of stuff for Tolman and I love the fact that I have the opportunity to be here to report it.

Last time I skipped over a team has done especially well this year, our cheerleaders. They're the large division state champs in their competition athletically in the state and they go to an international inertia competition in Florida. They came in second in large division and they won the three grand champ titles invitational's. They didn't

win just in their division they won in divisions above them as well. We have a new unity basketball program where athletes from our school pair up with physically and mentally challenged students and they play. It's great and everyone loves it. If you have the opportunity to come and see a game I would so suggest that. Also our school has been doing a lot of work with the Red Cross for the Japanese aid effort doing quite successfully. At the same time the National Honor Society is doing a lot of charity work for the Blackstone Valley Children's Shelter. The Saturday before last, nine people from Tolman went to Habitat for Humanity on Veazie Street in Providence and it was a great experience and knowing that you are helping people with good quality, low income housing that they can buy and own is just amazing and you work alongside the people who are going to own it. It was a great time. At the same time we had the talent show and movie night and that was to raise funds so our community chorus could go to New York for competition. There was an amazing turn out. There was more than enough money to pay for the bus and they went to URI for the first year of competition and placed first in their category. The other day we had a college fair at Tolman and had thirty five schools attend and everything from junior colleges to technical schools; Para military schools such as Mass Maritime and four year colleges. We were terrified because this was the first year Tolman has ever done this but we received so many compliments. We had so many schools come up to us and say this was the best organized events we've been to, when you do it again, please call us back we would love to come back. Juniors actually

filled out more information sheets than I have seen juniors take the initiative to fill out before. We think we were successful in that. On Saturday, we competed in a Science Olympia and one of our sophomores brought home a silver medal for the science bowl. Two juniors brought home bronze medals for their work and I and my sister brought home bronze medals as well. Our seniors have received acceptances from Brown, Cornell, URI Pharmacy, Rhode Island College, Roger Williams, CCRI, Holy Cross, UNH, University of New Haven, University of New Hampshire, UVN, UMASS Amherst, Dartmouth, and Mass College of Pharmacy. It's such an exciting time and financial information is coming in as well. On April 29th we have the junior prom at Johnson and Wales Inn and in May, senior prom at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. Thank you for your time.

Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts:

Emily: Good evening. I'd like to congratulate all of my fellow seniors who are receiving their acceptances and going off to college—great job! Some of the colleges we were accepted include University of Connecticut, Rhode Island College, Boston Conservatory, University of Vermont, Seton Hall, New Hampshire College, Pace University, and many more. We are really excited about tomorrow. It is the JMW music department recital and it's going to be \$5 to get in and the money is going to benefit the music department as we fundraise to attend chills and thrills. Chills and thrills is a competition where each school goes and performs one acapella piece and we compete and we hang around at Lake Compound. It's going to be a really awesome time and we're really happy that everyone in the community

is going to come and support us at this recital and I'll be singing. The jazz festival will take place on April 27th at 7:00 PM. Also the JMW art exhibition at the Visitor's Center was a great success and will be there until April 29th. Many local artists attended and the students' work was all really great. Congratulations to Mr. Kane, our teacher and the JMW arts' majors. Also a great job was done by the JMW jazz ensemble, led by Mr. Beauregard. Speaking of jazz it's National Jazz Appreciation month. Senior recital has been changed from May 4th to May 25th and we're planning on having it at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School in East Providence at 7:00 PM. On May 11th we will have our senior project night and it will be filled with food, fun and friends. On May 13th we'll be holding our prom at Johnson & Wales Inn. The music department will be singing the National Anthem at the Pawsox on May 19th. Lastly the art department is going to be beautifying the school as you walk in you may have noticed an unfinished mural and that is just one of two murals that they are working on in the school. They are also going to be tiling the flower pots our front. Thank you and hope to see you next month.

Mr. Spooner: I find this so refreshing at the beginning of every meeting where we wake up to nothing but sour and despair and you come in and hear our students talk about their schools and their teachers and administrators and how happy they are with everything going on. I have to tell you they all deserve a round of applause.

IV. Celebration/Recognition:

Bristol County Savings Bank:

Mrs. Cylke: It really gives me great pleasure this evening to introduce several guests in our audience. I'd like to welcome the President and CEO, Mr. E. Dennis Kelly, Jr. of Bristol County Savings Bank; Ms. Michele Roberts, Senior Vice President-Marketing; and one of their newest employees, our past Mayor, Mr. James Doyle, welcome. I received a call requesting this meeting with several representatives from this bank and I thought they wanted to sell me something so I was amazingly surprised when we sat down and they said they wanted to be supported of the Pawtucket School Department and wanted to get involved in a project that would be important to students and to me. They shared with me their involvement with other communities and they gave me some time to think about what it might be that we would need support with but right away what came to mind was music. We have a very dedicated staff of music teachers but not enough instruments to do what we would like in the fifth and sixth grades—to build choral and band in those grades and public performing groups in high school. They indicated at this meeting it would be about \$10,000 that the bank could contribute to this cause. I was ecstatic and invited to a ceremony to receive the check and it was a gratifying moment that the bank was able to donate not \$10,000 but \$22,000 for our music program. This check has been deposited. We look forward to beginning this venture. What's been fantastic is everyone wants to support music in the schools. We had our first person walk into the building with the first instrument to donate and Ronnie is going to be inventorying those to make sure they get refurbished properly. Mike Tamburo with the Pawsox will be putting

together a special day where we can promote that. I would like to call forward Dennis, Jim and Michele. We also would like to personally thank you.

Mr. Kelly: My first thought is the student that were up here before, they're great examples of what the Pawtucket School System is doing and you have to be very impressed when you see them. I graduated from Tolman in 1965. I have a connection with Pawtucket and when we did meet with the Superintendent and the intent was I did want to acknowledge a couple of people. The intent was we would give a grant of \$10,000 for something that seemed important. The enthusiasm that I saw I think that listening is a key thing that you do, so when I said it was going to be \$10,000, she gave us a request for \$22,000, which is probably what I would have done. So we took that request under advisement. The key thing was the enthusiasm and the time she was willing to take to spend with us and talk about the school system and why this was important to the school system and when we came back and presented it to our board which for these contributions which would be Mike Tamburo from the Pawtucket Red Sox, Dan Sullivan from Collette Vacations; Jack Partridge from Partridge, Snow and Hahn and Jim Doyle, Ken Reilly who works for the bank. They enthusiastically endorsed the \$22,000 gift which we are proud to do. Michele Roberts actually oversees the charitable giving of the bank and is critical to what we do. The other person I would like to acknowledge is Mayor Grebien who spent time with us and I think in a similar vein was very enthusiastic for the School Department and again that is a great thing. His words to us were I

hope this is going to be an ongoing type of thing. So to the Mayor it will be and we look forward to coming back again next year and maybe talking about this program or maybe some other program that's out there and the leadership here in Pawtucket and the enthusiasm that they have is very important and it makes it easy for us to make a contribution to help out.

The former Mayor, Mr. Doyle: Good evening everybody. The first thing I must tell everyone is that the Mayor has been eyeing this podium and the reason for it is it's in much better shape than assuming the one that I used Don. Most of you were surprised that I had landed with this institution because I had told all of you that upon leaving office that I had hoped to achieve a position as a greeter at Wal-Mart. But it didn't work out I was under qualified. But Dennis Kelly rescued me and I've come over here. When Dennis and Michele asked me what I thought of this Superintendent and I was asked to make the appointment with her, I said in the short time that she was there I was tremendously impressed and continued to be on what type of person you are to Pawtucket. When we sat with her, I was totally amazed because when we asked her what we could do for her, she had a book in her hand and she opened it right away and said this is what I want. What really floored me was when she said there are more college scholarships available for music and the arts than there are sports. To look at the Pawtucket School System as it is today, you have classes in music and the arts, but you have no instruments. So you have no way for these children to experiment or use these instruments or all of the musical things that are available to

them were not available to them. Consequently when it came time for scholarships to be doled out, Pawtucket students were short changed and we are going to change that, quickly and thoroughly. For my part it's been a pleasure so congratulations each and every one of you for what you do because we all know for those of you who are in elected office right now do not have an easy job whether it be on a local, state or national level. Keep up the good work and thanks for having me. Thank you.

Ms. Roberts: These guys are a hard act to follow and I really don't have much to say other than we're really pleased to be in Pawtucket celebrating our tenth year. It's been a great ten years getting to know the people of this City. I serve on the Pawtucket Foundation here locally and it's an amazing group of people doing amazing things for the City. I wanted to congratulate you on your choice for Superintendent. The enthusiasm that we saw from the kids, we've seen the same kind of enthusiasm from Deb since working with her over the past few months. I'd like to thank Mayor Grebien as well. We really appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the community.

The Honorable Mayor Grebien: Good evening everybody. Dennis, Michele and Jim when they came into the office we talked about continuing a partnership that Mayor Doyle and his administration helped grow and I think it's important. This is truly a tribute to Bristol County Savings Bank, but Dennis did lie to you on one instance because when he came in we talked about the partnership I asked for \$12,000,000, not \$22,000. But we knew this was a great program and a great opportunity. The Superintendent is very aggressive and these

are the types of things that we are going to build on and make it a brighter future. I just want to thank Bristol County Savings for their partnership and all that they do for the community. Thank you to you also.

Mrs. Cylke: When the bank decided to support us with this endeavor I was fortunate and this was just my good luck I would be visited by the executive director of the Providence Philharmonic about a week later. This was to set up some concerts that Hasbro had put into place and his best friend from New York was coming to visit him and he's an executive with VH1 Save the Music. So I said I want to meet him and I'll take him to dinner or treat him to lunch. So I did and should be receiving this in writing but for the fall of 2012 VH1 Save the Music will contribute \$30,000 to an elementary school and Pawtucket is on the list. They work with the community at large to match that so that's \$60,000 that we could expect in 2012. The reason I put \$22,000 is I had a conversation with my assistant and talked to the music teachers and went through some catalogs and asked how much would it cost to purchase some clarinets, flutes, etc. and it was suggested what if we have a Craig's List night and purchase four for the price of one? It hasn't happened yet, but we have to have a good strategic plan in place. I think that Dr. Dellith's plan to have this high school music school was a good start for students here and we certainly want to extend that to all of our students in all of our grades in all of our schools. Thank you very much, Dennis, Jim and Michele.

Mr. Noonan: Why don't you tell us a little bit more about Bristol County Bank, how many banks that you have, how many employees,

etc.? I thought they earned that right.

Ms. Roberts: Bristol County Savings Bank has been in Pawtucket for ten years. We have been around since 1846 starting in Taunton. We currently have thirteen branches. We're \$1.2 billion in size. We are a mutual savings bank. Our charitable giving is an important part of what we do. We started the foundation back in 1996 and to date we have awarded about \$7,000,000 to several communities throughout Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Our closest location is Pawtucket, Rhode Island and we have locations in Attleboro, North Attleboro, Rehoboth, Taunton, Raynham, Franklin, Dartmouth, New Bedford and many others.

Mr. Spooner: If there is no objection I'd like to keep doing what we have been doing and move executive session to the end and keep moving along.

VIII. Acceptance of Previous meeting's minutes 3/15/11:

Ms. Bonollo moved to accept and approve the previous meeting's minutes of March 15, 2011. **Mr. Coughlin** seconded.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

IX. Public Participation:

Mr. Harris: Thank you for letting me speak here. I'm the executive director for the National Association of Social Workers for this local chapter. Before I start I would like to say that I am a big baseball fan and I will be donating two of my baseball books to this library.

What brought me here tonight was an unusual event as I know that you are aware that you in your budget crunch had to lay off the whole social work department except for one person. I've never seen that before so it brought people like me out of the woodwork to speak to you. I'm going to read the first two paragraphs of the document I distributed to you if that's okay and then go through it. Mr. Harris expressed the importance of social workers in the schools and the critical roles they have providing effective services to students, faculty and families and how they are held to a high level of rigorous and continuing educational requirements. Social workers have to be in school for six years and have to pass a test in the State of Rhode Island and they have to continue their education at thirty hours a week every two years as well as the ninety hours required by the certification process for the State of Rhode Island. Every public agency shall report annually to RIDE with the agency's policy to determine how it meets the needs of students with disabilities. I don't know how you are going to be able to do that if you don't have the staff required to perform the duties. As far as the Basic Education Plan it was designed to act as a guide not policy. It was designed to act so that this body here make plans based on those guidelines and have accomplish what they need to do. In 1955 the National Board of School Social Workers developed some standards for school social workers. I've spent twenty five years working with families and what I have learned is the kids at risk have a whole host of things going on. The last thing on their mind is getting an education. They're just figuring out how they are going to survive the day and that's what

school social workers as well as other support staff help students survive that basic so they can learn. The other thing I share is that what I've learned about most students is and I share the same thing and that's I could not read until I was in the fifth grade. There is a disconnect with students and what they learn. It's very unusual to have a whole department wiped off even though I know you plan on rescinding some of those. I was also was a principal for an alternative learning school in Massachusetts and what I would teach the kids is that you cannot start an action without causing a reaction.

You have kids that would slam doors or push someone down, not intending to hurt somebody but someone does because of their reaction. So you set yourselves in motion and you didn't think about what the consequences were going to be and I hope you find ways to bring back the social workers because you are going to need them. Thank you very much.

Mr. Knight: I'd like to tell everybody a story. Last week I was at my house and my dog went crazy barking. I went to the window and saw a little child who was probably seven or eight years old walking up the hill. I live near Varieur School. Next to that child was a gray car and that car pulled up to that child and the person in it spoke to the child and the child walked on. I watched the car follow the child up the hill so I got concerned. I called the police, but when there wasn't a cruiser available, I followed the car. I followed that car and child all the way up to East Avenue near the Modern Diner when the police finally arrived. It really surprised the hell out of me to find out that the child being followed was being followed by a teacher who was

concerned that the child was too young to go home alone. That teacher got the hell scared out of her by the two police officers pulling up on her. I just wanted to say that's one thing I never expected to see in this City, and it's a testament to that particular teacher and someone should recognize her.

I was at the last budget workshop and I was very disappointed in the presentation of the budget. As everyone is aware the Uniform Charter of Accounts is now available on the RIDE website. When I took the time to compare the numbers that were shown with the UCOA and the numbers that we were being provided for in the budget, they don't connect. We need a budget that tells the citizens of this City everything that is being spent and where it is being spent and by whom. I was at the City Council last week and a question was asked of the City Finance Director concerning accounts. In the management letter there was a statement that said accounts in the School Department had not been reconciled in a timely manner that had caused a problem with last year's audit. When Mr. Wunschel was asked about it, he said he didn't know what the accounts were. I find that unacceptable. How many accounts does the school department have? My understanding is that there are probably about two dozen and if that is true why aren't the financial reports provided to the school committee monthly? Thank you.

Ms. McComiskey: Good evening and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you tonight. I was very pleased to hear the Superintendent say it doesn't hurt to ask because I'm here to ask all of you for something. I am a former resident of the City of Pawtucket

and I am also a school social worker. I am here to urge you to reconsider your decision to lay off all but one of the social workers in the district. It's a decision that doesn't make any sense to me even dealing with these very difficult fiscal times. It has been suggested to me that it has been an error that it had occurred and I'm certainly hoping so because it seems it would be one that would be relatively easy to correct. Things happen and I understand that and I'm hopeful that you will understand more completely after hearing tonight's testimony the role of the schools' social worker in this town. As Mr. Harris stated, to make the decision to cut all but one social worker will have a significant detrimental impact on your students, their families and their communities. References have been made to the BEP and to the reorganization IDEA in reference to the fact that because they are no longer mandated by those acts that the school district has no obligation to provide school social workers. I argue that you do have an obligation. You have an obligation to the students, the families and to the entire community. The BEP has been streamlined significantly and you folks that have been sitting on a committee know that it has one from a huge document to a pretty slim one. The reason for that from what I've been told is that it was designed to be used as a guide not as an absolute in terms of determining what services should be available. The prerogative was given to school committees to make decisions using the BEP as a guideline to best meet the needs of your district. I did testify at the BEP hearings and in Washington DC at the special education reorganization act and I know that their position was that these were

needed to serve as a guideline and never intended to outline the districts what has to be done. It was the presumption of the Commissioner when I testified and also at the federal level we needed these services to be preserved. Pawtucket social workers are needed. Your social workers make life and death decisions for your students every day. I know that you're not familiar with them so I would like to outline some of them. They do clinical assessments for students that are suicidal. They make intense and complicated decisions as to whether those students have to be referred for hospitalization or outpatient mental health services. They make the necessary decisions for food and shelter and as you well know a student cannot learn if they are worrying about whether there is going to be adequate food and a safe place to go home to. These social workers also combat bullying and strive to instill in these students working things through in a positive non violent way. Unfortunately, when those efforts don't work, it's these same social workers that offer intervention and comfort for students in the community who are deeply affected by violence. All students need to feel safe, protected and cared for and heard. They need to know that how no matter how preoccupied their teachers and administrators get, someone will be there for them. The teachers also need to know that the social workers will be there for them. Especially now with the new teacher evaluation system in place that will be measuring the student's success based on how well you teach. The stakes have never been higher and I've come to urge you to continue your commitment to the students' needs and the teachers in Pawtucket by ensuring that these

social workers continue to be employed. I want to be sure that you're not leading by providing the least possible services but providing what is possible happens. I'm urging that you consider keeping your school social workers. Thank you.

Mr. Beaupre: Good evening, Mr. Chairperson; Members of the School Committee, Mrs. Cylke; Mr. Conlon, Ms. Liss. I come before you tonight with a level of disappointment and a level of concern. My colleague Mrs. McComiskey and Mr. Harris spoke specifically about social workers and I also like to address the need for social workers. As a fourth grade classroom teacher I have seen the need the tremendous need for the work that our social workers do. So my disappointment is that they are on the chopping block so to speak. At the same time there are one hundred and forty other licensed personnel who have also received layoff notices. I not only speak on behalf of our social workers but I speak on behalf of the one hundred and forty other workers of our teaching body of our professional staff who we know our school population is there. We have classes currently with larger than contractually class size limits; larger than acceptable class size limits nationwide. Yet, we still have one hundred and forty classroom teachers who may not have jobs next year. This isn't about people losing their jobs. We now have 9,000 students in the City of Pawtucket who are probably going to be in classes well beyond research based class size limits where they won't be able to receive the best possible education they deserve. So my level of disappointment is heightened by the fact that here we are at the April school committee meeting and there's not a recall on the

agenda. We know that the children are there. We know that there's going to be a need for these people and these children deserve the best education and yet we haven't made an effort to recall anybody yet. Mrs. Cylke and I had a conversation last week and I understand, I do, the budget is in dire straits. But is it enough to say that because of the budget our student's should suffer? I know Mrs. Cylke that we have had numerous conversations about this and it is the intent of the school department to bring back as many of these people as possible for the education of our kids and I know of utmost priority is our social workers. I appreciate you for that and I thank you for that. I hope that come the May meeting that we do see some recalls that we do see that our students will be served with the professionals that we currently have, that ours are the best educators and they need to remain. That's my level of disappointment.

My level of concern comes from your item regarding binding arbitration. I see on your list that you are going to be asked to either approve or deny, accept or reject. My concern is that because Tim Duffy and the Rhode Island Association of School Committees says binding arbitration is bad that this school committee is not going to think clearly about it. Binding arbitration is good for kids, fair to management and fair to teachers, fair to unions. Binding arbitration is good for kids because we all saw what happens when binding arbitration is not allowed, we saw it last year and the year previous in East Providence. The East Providence Association and the East Providence School Committee came to impasse on an expired contract. Arbitration was requested and an arbitrator's award was

given. That arbitrator's award was accepted by the East Providence Education Association, one in which reduced teacher's salaries and increased cost sharing by fifteen percent. Accepted by the East Providence's Education Association denied/rejected by the School Committee and then we saw in January the imposition the breaking of the teacher's union in East Providence. We saw court cases, we saw money being spent that no one in the State of Rhode Island has, not the unions, not the school departments. Had binding arbitration been allowed as it is in other unions, teachers are the only unions, I believe, that don't have the right of binding arbitration than we wouldn't have seen that. That arbitrator's award would have been given and we would not have seen the mess we saw in East Providence. Why is that good for kids? It's good for kids because the stress of the school department, of the teachers, of the portrayal of the negativity in the newspapers on the television certainly had an impact on students. Binding arbitration eliminates that. I urge you to take a look at Connecticut. Connecticut has had binding arbitration for teachers unions for quite a while. There has never been a case in Connecticut where arbitration was sought and an arbitrator's award was given and the teachers union came out smelling like roses nor has management come out smelling like roses. Binding arbitration allows for third party, impartial party to look at best and final offers from both sides and makes a fair award—fair to management and fair to teachers. So I ask when you discuss the binding arbitration resolution tonight that you think carefully before accepting and carefully look into why binding arbitration works. I urge you to reject

binding arbitration that opposes binding arbitration and look more carefully at our binding arbitration and why it should work. Thank you.

X. New Business:

1. Appointments:

• Staff Accountant

Mrs. Cylke: For our first appointment this evening I'm asking that our committee approve the appointment of a staff accountant. The information was presented in your packet. The good news is well the good/bad news is there were so many applicants that there are so many trained accountants out of work that we had a very strong pool to choose from and we're asking that you accept the recommendation to hire Lynne Prodger for that position.

Mr. Tenreiro moved to approve the appointment of Lynne Prodger, Cambridge, MA as staff accountant: \$43,850 from local budget; \$4,150 from grant budget for a total salary of \$48,000. **Ms. Nordquist** seconded.

Ms. Nordquist: Who was on this interview committee besides Mr. Conlon and Ms. Baker.

Mr. Conlon: It was just the two of us, Maggie and me.

Mr. Araujo: Is this the same amount budgeted for the previous employee?

Mr. Conlon: Yes, the local budget.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Noonan: Can we move that next item to after executive in case something happens that would affect my vote at least for me. There's a rumor out there, so if we could.

Mr. Spooner: Does anyone have any objection?

2. Approval of 2011-12 School Calendar:

Mrs. Cylke: Ms. Mercer and I have had the opportunity to meet with our union representatives to discuss the school calendar for next year and that calendar is presented to you this evening for your approval. It has received the approval of the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance.

Mr. Tenreiro moved to approve the 2011-2012 School Calendar. **Ms. Bonollo** seconded.

Ms. Nordquist: I noticed that in September and November there are no dates for election days is that an oversight?

Mrs. Cylke: No actually that came up and a phone call was and it was determined that we would be able to have school this November.

Ms. Nordquist: I'm sorry I was thinking ahead, I was thinking November, 2012.

Mr. Tenreiro: Just to make an edit October 10th is marked but over to the left it's noted October 11th is Columbus Day. Another small minor error where it says trimester schedule that mid tri progress report would happen reads 10/14/12 and should read 10/14/11. January 20th and March 9th are underlined and nothing is indicated as to what they are.

Mrs. Cylke: The Deputy and Lynn Cristino have a program that they

put this in so I don't know what the underline means.

Mr. Beaupre: It looks like it's the end of the grading periods.

Mrs. Cylke: I think that's what it is.

Mr. Tenreiro: With all the high schools doing these portfolio presentations I think it might be important to add a presentation day for those portfolio reviews. It's a very important day and something that we might want to consider in the future.

Ms. Bonollo: Does the date change for the second trimester as well?

Mrs. Cylke: I'll bring back a corrected copy, I apologize.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Binding Arbitration Resolution:

Mr. Coughlin: As all the members of the school committee know that are on the RIASC email list and by now I've been told that everybody on the school committee and Mrs. Cylke is on email list which is why the emails are no longer forwarded by me. Tim Duffy has put out, he is by the way the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Association of School Committees and he has asked about every school committee member in the state to put this resolution that is in your packet before your respective school committees for an up and down vote. This particular resolution is targeted at general assembly bill 2011-H 5961, but the resolution is more all encompassing and RIASC is asking the school committees to vote up and down as to whether or not they will reject binding arbitration in any legislation that comes

forward. I want to thank Mr. Beaupre for his presentation earlier because you have now heard a pretty fair statement from the teachers' position on this and I'm just going to give you the position that RIASC has developed on it and then ask the committee to take a vote on the resolution.

Paramount in this is that there is some legislation up on the Hill right now that I don't know if it is going to pass but the main thrust for that is because it is going to diminish the authority of school committees in Rhode Island and I'm being told that this is part of the national trend actually. There's legislation up there that would call for a statewide teacher contract. Obviously that would take the bargaining power away from the local school district. It would take it away from the local school committee and collective bargaining would take place in a much higher level and we would all live with the result of that contract if it were negotiated. Binding arbitration is in RIASC's position very similar to it will take our ability for us to manage our budget away from us. It will take our ability to negotiate away from us. It will lead to any negotiations that reach an impasse going to a binding arbitrator. The unique thing about this is that some people have expressed at some of the RIASC meetings that if we go to binding arbitration mathematically compensation will be a fast track to mathematically the way arbitrators will rule. They will look at averages and start to award based on averages. If you look at the progression of this, you're going to wind up with the average of the averages is going to start being taken so that all the compensation will eventually probably come up very uniform average. The third

piece of legislation is legislation approving situations that have come up in Pawtucket where the City Council has decided to take final control over all of our negotiated contracts and that they would have to have final approval. Again from a statewide perspective this would again tend to eviscerate the powers of the school committees because the school committee could actually become a ping pong ball. Our negotiating teams could actually become ping pong balls because between the City Council and the Union negotiations where you think you have a deal, they say no we're not going to approve it, go back and tell them this or that. That's all I've got to offer on this and I've been providing you with the talking points provided by the Rhode Island Association of School Committees. I haven't done a legal analysis of the underlying statute nor do I intend to. I want to thank the Superintendent for doing the summary on this.

Mr. Coughlin moved that the committee approve the resolution opposing Rhode Island General Assembly bill 2011 H 5961 on binding arbitration. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Mr. Noonan: With respect to the resolution who is it binding to? It's the legislature's decision so how is the world going to collapse if it's voted for? It's just a resolution that we're going to pass or not pass. They're going to make the decision on the arbitration on the Hill, correct? The concern should be addressed to them not us. Let's make it clear that this resolution may not have any effect whatsoever. It's still the legislature's call they either pass the legislature or they do not pass the legislature. I really appreciate Mr. Beaupre's concern that I have been brainwashed and cannot think clearly because Tim

Duffy's name is on this thing. I really think that thinking clearly is obviously something I'm capable of doing because I'm so influenced by Tim Duffy. As far as I know I've never been brainwashed by him and have independent judgment. That fact that I could be accused of not thinking clearly, that there is a concern that he is disappointed because Tim Duffy may have an undue influence on me. And even worse is that this controlling influence on this committee may mean nothing whatsoever. I support it.

Ms. Nordquist: I am opposed to the resolution and not because I think that anyone is being brainwashed but simply because I'm not going to pass something because it gets thrown up into the air and it's a matter of whether or not they feel anyone is brainwashed. I just want to clarify what Mr. Coughlin said something about the state moving in the direction of a statewide teacher contract and I would actually like to point out that it would probably be in the benefit of Pawtucket teachers seeing that they are in the bottom of the pay scale so they would probably all get a raise. I've been on this negotiating committee and I don't think any power would be taken away. I feel that all of these meetings have been respectable back and forth and when it came time when we couldn't come to an agreement, I would be open to an arbitrator and arbitration. Lastly when you read this resolution, there is some strong language in here that is really upsetting. We as taxpayers are already burdened with some of the highest property taxes nationally. What does that directly have to do with teaching? If anything good teachers make for a better City. There are other unions in this city that have binding

arbitration and there is no correlation between binding arbitration and the taxpayers. I'm not supporting the resolution and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Noonan: Let's look at Connecticut let's look at the whole state of Connecticut. Mr. Beaupre brought that up but what he didn't say is that the salary and benefits for teachers have gone through the roof. Maybe that would have been relevant in our discussion on binding arbitration and voting it up and down. In other words there is a self interest here that goes beyond the children. If you're going to cite examples, let's cite the whole examples.

Mrs. Cylke: The concern right now is the economic climate right now and as Mr. Coughlin said a good arbitrator will look at those numbers carefully and the concern was that the binding arbitration was simply something that you cannot afford. A concrete answer I can provide for you tonight is UCOA is something you can compare. Woonsocket is funded better than Pawtucket. It may not sound like much but \$500 more a student for 8,000 students is \$4,000,000. All I need is \$800,000 to bring back the social workers. That's the concern that I have. When Mr. Coughlin and I discussed this presentation on this agenda it was not biased, it really has a purpose. It may put school committees in a position that it says based on averages.

Mr. Spooner: Ron you were very eloquent this evening with what you had to say. We could sit here and debate this issue all night and we all understand why. I've been called pro-union, anti-union and I've been called a lot of other things. What I try to do on this committee is look at every issue and follow the big bills. I try to read these things

and look at both sides of the coin and see what's best for the people at the time. Will everybody always agree with my vote? No, but that's the way it goes sometimes. I know and applaud the teachers. I remember when I was back here with the teachers and the residency issue. You won that one and good for you. I was born here in this city, raised here and went to school here. I try to believe everything that was instilled in me. Do I get a little cynical as I get older? Yes, I think we all do. Am I going to try to do what's best for this city, yes—but is it really going to matter? It's going up to Smith Hill along with a lot of other things this year and they are going to make the decision and as sure as I'm sitting here, I'm sure the people from Ron's side are going to go after it. I know you're all very good at what you do and I applaud you all for it. I think it's good for a group of people to debate an issue. My biggest concern is it takes away from common sense people to bargain in good faith. I've always tried to bargain in good faith with everyone. What can we afford to do here in Pawtucket? We have a great school system here in Pawtucket and I'll put it up against anyone in the state. I will support this because I don't think it's going to hurt anybody, but I want everyone to understand that I think when you sit down and deal with common sense people and deal with them fairly you can come to a reasonable solution to anything. I think that's what I was taught most and why I'm proud to be a graduate of the Pawtucket School System. Thank you.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes;

Ms. Nordquist-no; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion passed six in favor; one opposed.

4. CDC Childhood Obesity Grant Proposal:

Mrs. Cylke: I had promised the committee that we would bring before the committee any grants and as listed in the summary I received a grant proposal that had a very tight timeline for my support. So in my letter I wrote supporting it I wrote that if they get the grant I would bring it back if that's something you want to do. I'm absolutely convinced in my mission that this is something we want to do, but I don't want to imply that we'd get involved in the grant without you taking a look at it first. We're asking that you would support my letter of support and if they get the grant we'll bring it back for your final approval.

Ms. Nordquist moved to approve the Superintendent, Mrs. Deborah Cylke's letter of support for the CDC Childhood Obesity Grant. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

XI. Special Report of the Superintendent of Schools:

Mrs. Cylke: I had received a phone message from Mr. Knight regarding an incident he shared and was definitely pleased to hear that this teacher had gone above and beyond so I have a call in to find out if I can see who it is. I'd like to express my personal thanks to that teacher. It was heartwarming to hear about this and I want to

thank Mr. Knight for calling the police because when you see something suspicious like this you want to watch out for a young child.

I want to remind the school committee that we will be meeting with the Shea NEASC committee on May 1, 2011 and they do want to have about an hour with the school committee. It's on a Sunday afternoon.

We'll remind you as that becomes closer. Ms. Mercer is taking a few days to implement a Read 180 program at our elementary schools and we're really excited about this. It's a response to intervention and other additional intervention for students who are not reading well at elementary school and it's a great use of technology once we have those elementary labs up and running. It's also Systems 44 that related to Read 180 for students who are significantly weak in their reading skills. It's very interactive and offers lots of encouragement.

Also our technology lab has been installed at Goff Junior High School and once we have kids in they're the best tour guide, we'd like to maybe have a meeting at Goff and take you on a tour so they can share their progress with you.

XIII. Special Report of School Committee Members:

Ms. Nordquist: I just want to say that this is my seventh year and already this seems like at these meetings we keep leaning further and further away from being here for students and it's really starting to become disheartening. I really hope that besides just tonight when we have people that come like tonight and give grants to keep the music programs going where are the recalls on the agenda, Mrs. Cylke? This is the first time in all my years not one recall. Secondly,

I asked for information and have not received anything nor did I see anything about the high school schedule. That's another thing that is going to affect our budget that is taking away from our students. We just keep taking away from our students. Increasing class size, changing the junior high schedule, removing social workers—I want to see us move back into the direction of doing what's right for the students and for the reason why I want to be on the school committee. I understand that I'm only one of seven people and I'm only one vote and can only do what I can do and at the end of the day if I can lay my head down and look into the mirror and be confident with what I've done I'd like to see that happen. I cannot even believe that the budget was not even on the agenda today to discuss even more. There are even more cuts in there today that are affecting children. If this is going to be more about getting that number down than what's here for students than this is going to be a sad state of affairs for somebody like me who is on this board who is here for students for the next year and a half. So could you please move in the right direction and start to do what's right and get the information that's requested out because it's actually good points that I'm trying to make here and do what's right for students. Personally I'd like to see that happen.

Ms. Bonollo: On a positive note, I went on the National School Board Convention and I made a number of contacts there and I came back with them—a lot of positive things for Pawtucket. I was able to talk to people from the USDA and they have a grant for teachers, specifically a grant for a teacher to go to Washington and to be trained and bring

that information back to their district and they're given \$500 for their time and all expenses paid and they are brought back a year later to review how the program has been established and they are given another \$500 for their services then. In addition to that I spoke with someone who let us know about a grant and gave that information to the Superintendent and we don't have a lot of time, it's due May 13th. It's anywhere from \$100,000 to \$750,000 for the district every year for three years to increase the physical education for the students. With the grant that Debbie spoke about from Brown University I spoke with Sodexo and Shape Up Rhode Island is looking for a district to work anonymously with the pedometer program like they have with the adults. I said that Pawtucket would love to have this program. I also spoke with Sodexo because a number of students have mentioned that they don't like vacation because when it's vacation they don't get to eat. I spoke with Mike from Sodexo so that we can look into some funding that maybe we can have specific areas in the city so that the kids can go and pick up food so that they can have lunches. If all of those come together—there are other things also, some free literature that will be made available so if it comes to fruition, it was an awesome four days for the City of Pawtucket.

Mr. Noonan: People get up there and make statements and we don't have a right to question them or comment on them. I agree that sometimes they are not necessary, but tonight is a graphic illustration when special reports are absolutely necessary. I'm going to address on this night my feeling that somehow if we don't agree with the teachers or we are once again charged with not being

concerned about the students. What do you want us to do? Do you want us to just ignore the financial problems? Do you want us to abrogate our responsibilities of the City Charter, forget of fiduciary duty to the taxpayers? Let's just write a blank check. I have no problem with the teachers advocating their position. I believe that a lively debate is essential, but to get up here and to mischaracterize our intent based on some feeling is just wrong. It's not fair. I've been hearing this argument since the day I've been a school committee member, if we don't agree with something, we're not there for the students. I heard that same thing over the Jackie Walsh vote. What kids are we here for? I've been here for the kids as much as anybody.

I worry about them, but unfortunately I just can't forget that these problems exist. These problems are real. There are legal obligations imposed on us as a school committee and individually. We have to take a necessary risk. Everything is great when there is money. Sacrifices have to be made when there isn't. Just because the teachers don't agree with certain self interest groups, don't tell me I'm not for the kids. Thank you.

Ms. Nordquist: Please don't say their self interest groups. Our teachers are here for their students.

Mr. Noonan: I'll clarify that, I misquoted and I believe they have an interest.

Mr. Tenreiro: The soap box is the very reason I'm trying to remove this item and I believe this is a glaring example of that. I think if you want to make comments about the budget and the process that you call the Chairman and that you make sure that the budget gets on the

agenda and you make those comments then. You could have made a great presentation about your conference, but this is what this has collapsed into here at this time.

Mr. Spooner: I just want to say one more thing and Ms. Nordquist hit on it. There are seven members here and Nicole you can feel free to put the budget on any meeting you want or anything else.

Ms. Nordquist: I've asked for information about the high school schedules and it has not been on the agenda and I have not received one thing about it. I also asked that the Tolman cheerleaders be put on the agenda and that wasn't on here either.

Mr. Tenreiro: Point of order, Mr. Chairman we can't turn this into a free for all conversation.

Ms. Nordquist: I understand this is not the time or the place but let's call it what it is this is our opportunity to say what we want if we want to speak.

Mr. Spooner: I don't think anything has been resolved yet. There's a lot of things involved with these decisions that have to be made. You can't just run off with them. Obviously with the social workers tonight—does anyone want to cut the social workers? Absolutely not! But the reality is here's my bill, here's my pocket, and here is what I've got. So we look at the best way for it to go and what do we call that, we call it negotiating. We try to sit down and try to put it together and move forward one way or the other. We're going to do and vote on things and we're going to see how it falls and majority rules. I hope I make the best decisions and I've never not been able to look into the mirror and I hope I never will because I always try to

no matter who I am talking to. I don't want you to think you are being stopped from anything. Please if you feel that you are not getting information from someone, call me, you have my number, you know where I am. I will look into it and get back to you. That's all I'm asking you.

Ms. Nordquist: I know I'm only one of seven, but I asked for information on the change of the high school schedule and I haven't received it. I asked that it be explained to me to show me how it's going to work and that hasn't happened.

Mr. Spooner: I do not believe it's been finalized yet. Has it?

Mrs. Cylke: A couple of things. I asked the Deputy when we typically recall and she said the first meeting in April and she is away on important school business. Our intent is to recall teachers in April and have a special meeting. Ms. Mercer has to be present because she is the person knowledgeable. Also we have the information prepared on the high school schedule and I think it's very important to have Ms. Mercer and Dr. Jacob here because they are the ones who helped create it. I am working on the financial piece of it and Ms. Mercer and Dr. Jacob are working on the philosophical side of it. It was a joy to recognize the Slater Basketball team as you suggested at the last meeting and we will certainly do that with the cheerleaders.

Ms. Nordquist: I shouldn't have to look into this and check into these things to make sure they are on the agenda.

Mr. Spooner: Ms. Nordquist a simple phone call to me is all you need to do to make sure your request gets on the agenda.

Ms. Nordquist: We got the agenda on Friday, no Saturday and it

wasn't there.

Mr. Tenreiro: Point of order once again. There is a time and a place for governance and I think that all of our schools have a mission statement that talks about effective communication and problem solving and responsibility and we as a body of seven to continually be an example of that in a public meeting.

V. Possible Recess to Executive Session:

Mr. Tenreiro moved to recess to executive session in accordance with provisions under Title 42, Chapter 46, Subsection 5(a) (2) (legal advice and litigation/collective bargaining) of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island for the purpose of discussing and/or acting upon teacher contract negotiations; administrator contract negotiations and to seal executive session minutes. Mr. Noonan seconded

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

The committee recessed to executive session at 8:03 PM to 9:11 PM.

VI. Reconvene Open Session: Roll call:

The committee reconvened to open session and the Chairperson called it to order at 9:16 PM.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here; Mr. Spooner-here

Mr. Noonan left at 8:00 PM.

VII. Report Out vote(s) of executive session of 4/12/11, if applicable:
The Chairperson asked the clerk if there were any votes to report out. The Clerk reported that the committee voted unanimously to seal the executive session minutes and to adjourn the executive session.

X. New Business:

1. Appointments:

• Coaches

Mrs. Cylke: This evening we're asking the committee to approve the appointment of coaches and this would be a boys' freshman baseball assistant coach at Shea and boys' volleyball assistant coach at Tolman.

Mr. Tenreiro moved to approve the appointment of James Torres, 41 Campbell Terrace, Pawtucket, RI to the position of boys' freshman baseball assistant coach at Shea, salary: \$983 and Julie Seitsinger, 101 Bethany Lane, North Kingstown, RI to the position of boys' volleyball assistant coach at Tolman, salary: \$2,610. **Mr. Coughlin** seconded.

Mr. Coughlin: Tolman is doing fantastic in volleyball. This coach is doing a great job.

Roll call:

Mr. Araujo-yes, absolutely; **Ms. Bonollo**-yes; **Mr. Coughlin**-emphatically, yes; **Ms. Nordquist**-yes; **Mr. Tenreiro**-yes; **Mr. Spooner**-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Coughlin moved to adjourn. **Ms. Bonollo** seconded.

Voice vote carried unanimously.

The Chairperson adjourned the regular meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee on Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

Approved May 10, 2011